

prehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. But let me say again, we should begin with an immediate cease-fire.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. at Pulkova Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anatoliy Aleksandrovich Sobchak of St. Petersburg; Gov. Aleksandr Belyakov of Leningrad Oblast; and Comdr. Sergei Seleznev, Leningrad Military District.

## Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony in St. Petersburg *April 19, 1996*

Mayor Sobchak, Commander Seleznev, Director Shoshmin, ladies and gentlemen. We gather in this place as friends to remember the sacrifice of those who made our shared victory over fascism in World War II possible. In this cemetery lie the victims of the siege of Leningrad. For 900 days and 900 nights, the citizens here wrote with their blood and defiance one of the greatest chapters in all the history of human heroism. This place is testimony to all the Russian people gave and all they lost in the great struggle of World War II. It calls out to all of us, Russians and Americans alike, to work together in peace for the common good for all our people and for the world.

Mr. Mayor, here in this brave and beautiful city of St. Petersburg, we Americans are thousands of miles from home. But on this day, April 19th, 1996, our hearts must be very close to home and to the sadness and sacrifice of our own citizens. For it was exactly one year ago today that a bomb destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and struck at the very heart of America.

The people who fell under the rubble of that building were ordinary Americans, men and women going about their jobs, working hard to provide for their families. They were Government workers dedicating their lives to helping people make the most of their own lives. They were daycare providers, looking out for and teaching our young children, and they were our

children, full of promise and wonder, the pride and joy of their parents, the lifeblood of our future.

Today, in the somber spirit of this magnificent memorial to Russia's unforgotten and unforgettable sacrifice, I ask every American to join in a national moment of silence for the victims of Oklahoma City.

The loss we suffered in Oklahoma City reminds us all that when peace is broken, life itself becomes fragile. And so today, as we remember the staggering losses of the Russian people in World War II and the Americans who died in Oklahoma City, we pray, too, for an end to violence and the restoration of peace in the Middle East and everywhere where neighbors still fight over their ethnic and religious differences.

Let us pause to give thanks for the freedoms, old and new, that now bless our lives. And let us pause to pray for those who lost their lives to freedom's enemies, and for those whose tomorrows can still be saved, if we are wise enough and strong enough to find peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. at the Piskaryevskoye Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anatoliy Aleksandrovich Sobchak of St. Petersburg; Comdr. Sergei Seleznev, Leningrad Military District; and Alexander Shoshmin, director, Piskaryevskoye Cemetery.